

Miles Mayhew - Critical Areas Comments

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Subject: Critical Areas Comments

My main comment is don't weaken the Seattle Critical Areas ordinance.

The wetland and urban stream protection could be strengthened in ways that would be more specific about what wetlands and streams need protection to meet state and federal laws such as the Endangered Species Act.

The section on daylighting buried streams is presently very weak and thus has not been applied on private property as of yet, to my knowledge. This has lead to much confusion, litigation, and delay in development and critical area protection. The daylighting issue needs more specifics to give everyone an understanding of the purpose and appropriate and reasonable locations of daylighting creeks in Seattle. Initiative 80 made an attempt to provide a more clear understanding of when daylighting of a creek would be appropriate and reasonable. The language in Initiative 80 could be used as a guide for providing more specificity to the definition, locations, appropriateness and advantages of urban creek daylighting. Possibly a study will need to be conducted, using the maps SPU created of Seattle urban creeks that have been buried over the years, to determine the most appropriate and beneficial locations for daylighting creeks to comply with state and federal environmental laws.

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